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Gallery and Studio

AT THE BOSTON ART MUSEUM.



THE Museum of Fine Arts has undoubtedly taken its place at the head of the sights of Boston. There are the old lions that we have had always with us—the Old South and the Old North, the Old State House, and Harvard old and new, and Bunker Hill Monument.

They serve for the objective of the tourist's conventional drive, between trains, from his hotel in a public hack, to see the old New England capital "en passant." But the Art Museum is worth a serious visit on purpose, and at least a day's study. To be sure, the conventional tourist's visit is made here, too, several thousand times, according to the registry during the season of travel; one may always come across the evidently newly-married pair, in their best clothes, listlessly hunting out the pictures from the voluminous catalogue, which they study more than the pictures. But the more one knows and has seen of art, the better is this collection appreciated. For those who understand what to look for it furnishes an almost complete compendium of all art of all ages, from the oldest Phœnician and Assyrian to the latest French—yes, and the latest American art; from the graceful statuettes of the Greeks of Tanagra to equally authentic carvings by the Mound Builders of the Miami Valley; from the colossal figures of the Pelasgi and the sarcophagi of the Egyptians to the exquisite pottery and gorgeous fabrics of the Japanese; from the architectural carvings, tapestries and armor of the European middle ages to the splendors of the modern potteries of France, Germany and England. One may take up almost any "craze" or fad of art, and pursue it exhaustively from the materials set before one in the cases and shelves of this Museum.

But to speak of the hanging of the painting rooms for the closing season: one passes without much detention, if he has been a tolerably regular visitor during the past year or two, through the main hall of paintings, where are the great "Quarry" of Courbet facing the noble "Joan of Arc" of Bastien-Lepage, the great Corôt, "Virgil and Dante," some large Daubignys, a charming group of small Troyons, and another rich knot of Diazes, with many a lovely thing of Millet or Michel, Couture, Rousseau, Jacque or Lambinet, and so on, cropping out here and there; the colossal but soundly good and sweet Paris Exhibition canvas of H. Lerolle; the great Salon landscape, as powerful as it is big, of Picknell, of Boston, less like the other American works in the room than like the great Frenchmen; the superb portrait of Rev. Mr. Waterston, by Grundmann, the head of the Art Museum school of painting; a collection of William M. Hunt's earlier works, and fine specimens of Foxcroft Cole, George S. Wasson, J. J. Enneking, Duveneck, Vedder, Inness, Gay, the late Mrs. Darrah, Lafarge, Miss Boott and other Americans, with some most interesting works by less known young men, such as Monks, Simmons, Ritter and Hendricks Hallet. A splendid Turner-esque triumph, this of Hallett's, with the big modern Cunarder! He has made it seem to loaf superbly and with great hauteur in the harbor, which is hardly wide enough for its Britannic length and bulk to turn round in, passively lying at ease, as if to show its majesty to the natives, while two or three little tugs flock and flutter around in busy efforts, that rock themselves, but do not stir the huge mass above them, though they are boring with energy around its towering stem to give its head a turn in toward its dock. Never was there put on canvas a more eloquent idealization of the forces of modern invention and engineering, not even by Turner, for this essay in his line is weakened by no stilted romanticism, but makes its effect and picturesqueness out of the actual truth of all details.

But, as I said, the attraction is not now in this room of the modern and contemporary painters. It is in the Allston room, so-called, that the great force and splendor of the show is attained, like the fortissimo of the climax in a movement of a symphony. Several distinct and important acquisitions have lately given tremendous point and pith to the solid mass of rich old canvases here pre-

served. There was already a gathering of some dozen Gilbert Stuarts, a half dozen Copleys, a dozen Washington Allstons, filling one side of the room. On another extends the great "Automedon with the Horses of Achilles" flanked by a variety of old Italian examples. But opposite the old American masters is a perfectly gorgeous wall of masterpieces of the Spanish school, "attributed by the late owner" (says the catalogue), "Mr. Henry Greenough, to Velasquez," together with an unquestioned Andrea del Sarto and two large and important Tintoretos. Near by on the one hand are a most richly-colored Bassano and another sketch by Tintoretto, which might have been done yesterday, so fresh are its broad brush-marks; and also a sketch by Paolo Veronese. A characteristically sweet and sentimentally grieving saint in warm tints, with upturned eyes, quivering mouth and symmetrically flowing locks, by Guido Reni, is vis-à-vis with a Magdalene in crystalline bluish white chiaroscuro, by Furini, a fairly wonderful piece of relief, modeling and flesh-painting, that holds the visitor fascinated with the mystery of its magical execution and the charm of its well-individualized character. But the pictures attributed to Velasquez glow in their colors like a painted window. There is a strange unevenness of quality in the drawing and details, especially as regards the dramatic relations of the personages—though, again, in the case of one of them, the dramatic connection is really intense—but the coloring, in solidity and depth, is of richness unimaginable. Below this overwhelming mass of color hangs the lovely and still more intensely, because more delicately, colored Andrea del Sarto (the heirloom of the Misses Timmins, Mr. Martin Brimmer's nieces), and flanking it hang the great Tintoretos, with their expanse of the color that only "old masters" maintain, connected over the doorway between by a most regal, brilliant and delightfully natural Madonna and Child, attributed to Carlo Cignani.

But aside from these splendid new loans of old masters in this summer's hanging, there are several new features of prime interest—the new Copley, for instance. It is a most admirable example of the first American great painter, because it shows so fully the vices of his earlier style, the hard and prosaic, but entirely practical way he had of looking at his subject. He "took what set afore him" (as the country photographer said in apology to the unflattered young lady), and no mistake! Nobody would fail to know this extremely important and positive personage if one were to meet her—which one would however prefer not to do, even for the interesting test of Copley's likenesses. This Mrs. Judge Russell, 1717-1778, might almost be mentioned along with the burgomaster, with his clean shave, in the Dutch collection in the Metropolitan Museum.

A very delightful and interesting group of paintings on this same wall is that bringing together the portraits of Gilbert Stuart, painted by himself, G. Stuart Newton, also by himself, G. P. A. Healey, by himself, Longfellow, by Healey, and N. P. Willis, by Francis Alexander. They are all the bequest of Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis. An artist's portrait of himself is the most interesting of self-revealings. Stuart's sketch of himself gives him a peculiarly wistful, searching, pathetically-anxious look. Young G. Stuart Newton, on the other hand, with his divinity-student appearance, looks completely well satisfied with himself, as indeed he may well be, if he can see that wonderful little painting of his, "Forsaken," which hangs just across the corner, and which has been well described as "a painted sob." Healey gives himself a shrewd Whistlerish alertness of expression, and is superbly painted, as is also his friend Longfellow, whom he gives, however, an intolerably goodyish appearance (in full profile, with the old-fashioned high dickey and neck-stock, to be sure), as though he were an upright young merchant, and taught the Bible-class in Sabbath-school. Alexander's portrait of N. P. Willis is of a curly-headed young fellow, and is full of sparkle and character, as well as a fine piece of color and modeling.

Three of the most constant and munificent contributors to the Museum have lately sent in valuable loans for the bric-à-brac rooms. That of Mrs. George W. Ham-

mond is a collection of rare old bits of silver—some ancient spoons of all nations, including two "apostle" spoons and a little silver ladle with the bottom made of a guinea of Queen Anne's time. From Mr. George W. Wales's great collection have lately come some beautiful pieces of Persian pottery, including a flowery, bright-colored teapot and some vases, with iridescent glaze, and some delicate Venetian glass, "mystic, wonderful." Dr. Bigelow, who still tarries on the other side of the earth, under the fascination of Japan and its art, has sent home a collection of lacquered boxes and pouches, of amazing richness, part of which is now seen in the Museum. Another new thing is the carving on wood panels of Giovanni Gallarotti, who is a workman in the employ of our Boston architect Emerson. This work is so delicate in fancy and exquisite in grace and execution, that it is hard to believe it is of this age and atmosphere. GRETA.

SCENE PAINTING FOR AMATEURS.

VI.—HOW TO PAINT ARCHITECTURE.

THE painting of architecture, interior and exterior, presents many difficulties and demands much knowledge not essential to the creation of landscape scenes. An acquaintance with the styles of architecture and a knowledge of the rudiments of perspective are particularly needful.

The style of an architectural scene should be harmonious even if not exactly correct—that is, it should present no glaring inconsistencies of design. The perspective of the scene should also be observed with sufficient care to present the masses in their proper relations. The infallibility of the architect is not, of course, expected from the amateur. Indeed, there are few professional painters who are really masters of architecture and perspective. But there should be at least a superficial appearance of correctness, so as not to offend the eye by gross errors. Minor ones will never be seriously criticised. I do not mean to say, however, that if you are able to paint a scene with absolute correctness you are privileged to do it without care or consideration of its accuracy. You should always do your best.

There are to be found in the illustrated newspapers and in the publications of the writers on architecture and decoration the very best originals for the use of the amateur scene-painter. They may not absolutely conform to the requirements of the stage, but it will not require much ingenuity to alter them. From such material of this kind as you can gather make your model for the scene as described in Chapter IV. That done, you will find your work much simplified.

The best way to secure approximately correct perspective in an architectural scene is to make a correct drawing on a small scale, and enlarge it by squares according to the process described in Chapter IV. I say approximately correct, because the most elaborate rules of perspective are modified and in many cases rejected altogether in painting for the stage. The rule with scene-painters usually is to keep all lines below the horizon level with the stage-floor. Those above are drawn in true relation to the horizon. You will notice at the theatre that the perspective of the wings is always carried out in this way, nor does it shock the eye. If the lines of the scene all harmonize, one does not criticise those minor liberties with the letter of the law of perspective which are unavoidable.

Make the design for your scene on paper, and make it with care. Enlarge it by square and outline it with ink or color. Prepare what pounce patterns you need and get the armament and details all in outline. Then color your sketch, and from the suggestions it conveys mix your colors for the scene. In arranging the light and shade of interior scenes, except when set windows are used, the illumination is always assumed to come from the middle of the scene and at the height of the eye. The lights and shadows of projections of the architecture must all be calculated on this basis.

An interior should be laid in with a couple of glazes, as described for the preparation of a landscape. Dark